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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 000412

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: GUATEMALA SUPPORTS OAS PROCESS IN VENEZUELA

REF: SECSTATE 36977

Classified By: PolMiloff Rob Copley for reason 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Ambassador Hamilton raised reftel talking points with Foreign Minister Jorge Briz on February 19. Briz responded that he has personally always been supportive of real democracy in Venezuela, adding that until recently, as a member of the private sector, he had maintained close contact with counterparts in Venezuela's business community. Briz said the GOG would give serious consideration to making a statement either individually, or more likely, in concert with its Central American neighbors at the upcoming Central American Presidential Summit to be held in Guatemala next week (three days before the CNE announces its decision on February 28). Briz took the Ambassador's suggestion that the MFA convoke the Venezuelan Charge to express the GOG's concern.

2. (C) ADCM and PolOff backtracked the demarche with Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Marta Altoaguirre and Director General for Multilateral Affairs Carla Rodriguez respectively on February 20. Altoaguirre said the GOG will fully support the OAS and Carter Center process and said that the decision to annul signatures was "a provocation." She added that she believes a referendum is the only way to avoid civil war in Venezuela and said she would give serious thought to ways the GOG can support the effort either through a statement at the OAS Permanent Council or a joint declaration by the Central Americans. Rodriguez was aware of our earlier interventions and expressed appreciation for the talking points which we left as a non-paper.

HAMILTON